

A REVIEWER REVIEWED.

A

F E W R E M A R K S

UPON

“Four Papers from the Boston Courier,”

CONCERNING

THEODORE PARKER, RALPH WALDO EMERSON,
GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS, AND THE
ABOLITIONISTS.

“We abhor that profane vulgarity which denies to an antagonist the merits which are justly his, because he may have been blinded to the truth of our principles by the demerits which are justly ours, — which hates the man because it hates his creed, and, instead of grappling with his argument, seeks in the kitchen-drain of scandal for the material to bespatter his reputation.”

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R E M A R K S .

A WRITER for the Boston Courier has seen fit to republish, in a neat volume, certain of his contributions to that journal, under the title of "Radicalism in Religion, Philosophy, and Social Life,"—thereby inviting public attention in a special manner to his opinions and speculations, which we will premise by saying are of the kind which are entertained and promulgated by that class of conservatives who assume to represent, in their various little circles, all the patriotism, all the moral excellence, all the true philosophy, or all the Christianity, which may be extant; whose ignorance (if ignorant they happen to be) is no restraint to their pretensions, and whose selfishness is only exceeded by their folly in attempting to put the rest of mankind to ridicule and contempt, for refusing to conform to their notions, and daring to think and act independently of them. While they are thus intolerant of the opinions of others, they claim the widest latitude for their own, and are not scrupulous as to the means, nor always prudent as to the measures, which they adopt for the accomplishment of their special designs. We have an example of this in the book before us; and we can only wonder at the recklessness of the writer in setting forth such a collection of blunders, false statements, sophistries, and perversions of divers kinds and degrees, as if they were undeniable

truths, — for as such he apparently expects they will be received by a credulous public.

Most of those who may chance to peruse this little book, will doubtless recognize at once its weakness and falsity ; but others, less discriminating, or not familiar with the facts of the case, and especially those whose predilections incline them to the writer's way of thinking, may possibly be misled ; others yet there are, who, understanding the matter fully, will gladly make the book an instrument, however poor, for forwarding certain selfish opinions and projects of their own. Therefore, as a simple act of justice to the parties who are freely discussed in its pages, we propose to point out a few of its misrepresentations and absurdities.

The volume contains four articles, the first purporting to be a review or criticism of two Sermons on Revivals, recently preached by Rev. Theodore Parker ; the second, a similar criticism of the last of Mr. R. W. Emerson's late course of lectures in this city ; and the third, of Mr. G. W. Curtis's lecture on Woman, delivered here and elsewhere. The examination of these several productions is of the most shallow and meagre kind ; sufficient, however, in the estimation of the writer, to establish his conclusions, which are, that the first-named gentleman is a hypocrite and an infidel ; the second, a very unsafe guide, whose teachings end in delusion ; and the third, a scio-list, who "stirs up vain and useless discontents among the weaker portion of the female sex." Having summarily disposed of these offenders, the writer coolly proceeds to the extirpation of that much abused and much abusing class of men and women known as Abolitionists, of whom he disposes in a few rapid strokes, — doubtless congratulating himself at the close of his volume, that he has accomplished a very pretty piece of work, in having so successfully achieved his original purpose, which was, he declares, "to show the various ramifications and mischiefs of fanaticism, as it works and will work." Let us glance at a few of "the various ramifications and mischiefs" of igno-

rance, egotism, and malignity, as developed in the book under consideration.

In the article on Mr. Parker, we are first entertained with a description of the audiences which assemble to listen to his preaching, as follows:—

“Of course a preacher like Mr. Parker will have hearers. Infidels will naturally resort to his tribune, for that kind of bolstering-up which they always need from one another. Lovers of novelty, who are troubled with little consideration of their moral responsibility, will go; for a speaker capable of no sound analysis of principle or evidence, and held back by no conscientious restraint from giving utterance to any wild idea which comes uppermost in his thoughts, gratifies their morbid fancy. Inconsiderate persons, actuated by various purposes of amusement; strangers in town, with more curiosity than principle; persons of unsettled minds; extremists of all classes; those who imagine there is a sort of independence exhibited in breaking away from the regular ministration of the gospel; and such as hope to get rid of uncomfortable thoughts by the removal of religious scruples, which they would fain deem fallacies if they could; in a word, men and women under the influence of the multitude of weak motives which affect the wandering and undisciplined mind; together with some, no doubt, who have conceived for themselves, the vague and fanciful idea of a certain moral transcendentalism, by which the manifestation of an image produced by themselves, worshipped by themselves, and ending with themselves, is substituted for the truth as communicated from Heaven to man,—all these congregate at the Music Hall to hear Mr. Parker.”

Truly a curious collection! It would have been more gratifying, however, if the writer had furnished us with the exact statistics of these various kinds of hearers, after the manner of the ingenious collectors of the statistics of disease, intemperance, crime, insanity, and other abnormal conditions of humanity, which so largely modify the welfare of communities and of nations. Who knows what valuable aid such information might render towards the solution of those problems of social life which have so long perplexed the minds of men?

This list of Mr. Parker's hearers, however, ample as it is,

is by no means complete ; and, judging from our own observation during several years, we are convinced that it does not include by far the larger portion of those who fill up the spacious Music Hall on Sundays ; among whom may be mentioned, — lovers of good preaching, who are always sure of hearing there a discourse, which, to say the least, is neither stupid nor weak, whatever may be the theme or mode of treatment ; those who seek for intellectual improvement, or who, well-cultured themselves, delight in the expression of a powerful, well-balanced, well-trained intellect in another, who are fond of original thought, fitly clothed in choice and elegant language ; persons of strong common sense, who despise cant, who like to hear things called by their right names, actual sins denounced, and real goodness praised ; those who like to hear a bold and independent man, who believes what he says, speak his mind, especially one that has a mind to speak ; haters of iniquity of every kind ; lovers of what is just and right ; young men who would learn to respect their conscience, who would be warned of the dangerous and attractive vices of passion, and stimulated to the pursuit of every manly excellence ; men who are no longer young, who would avoid the yet more dangerous and worse vices of ambition, and be encouraged so to live as to achieve a noble character, their life a blessing, and not a curse, to themselves and the rest of mankind ; young women who would not be swallowed up in the whirlpool of vanity and frivolity, but who would grow up to usefulness and feminine dignity, adorned with all those sweet virtues which are the crowning grace of womanhood ; women who have passed the first bloom of youth, who are never weary with well-doing, whose hearts and hands are in every good work, who spend their lives in the exercise of those “charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,” providing homes for motherless babies, or those worse than motherless, reclaiming the erring, lifting up the fallen, teaching the ignorant poor, and doing many another noble work, whereof no eye keeps watch or record, save that of God ; men and women also, who,

having emancipated themselves from the curse of a theology which once tormented them with the fear of an angry God and eternal hell, go thither to get an idea of religion which commends itself to their mind and conscience, heart and soul; others yet of deep and strong natural religious impulses, who feel the need of that aid and direction which only a man of the loftiest piety can give; all these, and many more of various needs, who seek such guidance as will best enable them to do their duty to man and God, to live a real life on earth and achieve a glorious destiny hereafter, congregate at the Music Hall, whose doors are freely open to all who choose to enter.

The writer next describes the effect of Mr. Parker's preaching: —

“Amid such a miscellaneous assemblage there will be many, no doubt, whose intellects, not overwell informed beforehand, will be entertained with speculations not familiar to them, and which, therefore, they think new; the natural pride of the human heart will be gratified; their vanity will be puffed up; they will conceive themselves released from the obligation of antiquated notions; they will believe they are elevated above the multitude; they will think better of themselves; they will think worse of their neighbors.”

If such were indeed the real influence of Mr. Parker's preaching upon his hearers, we should have good reason to suppose that the writer of this book had been one of the most constant and attentive of them. We have known, however, some instances in which effects quite the opposite of those just described have resulted from the preaching in question, among which may be mentioned, toleration on the part of an individual of the opinions or belief of such persons as may happen to differ from him concerning questions of religion, philosophy, or social life, — which does not indeed preclude him from using any suitable arguments or other fair means, to try to convince them that they are in the wrong, but which hardly warrants his resorting to wilful misrepresentation and abuse for the purpose of creating a prejudice against them in the minds of others.

The writer charges Mr. Parker with being hypocritical in his preaching, because he does not believe in the Bible as of divine authority, and yet "picks out of it moral precepts, of merely human weight, as he conceives, to form the text and the garnish of his performances;" and adds, that, to be fair, —

"Mr. Parker, who rejects the Bible as a standard of faith and the means of salvation, ought to say, 'I am an infidel,' and have nothing to do with it: but perhaps he agrees with us, that his followers would become very sensibly diminished in numbers, upon this honest basis. To give up this specious use of the Scriptures, would be really to abandon his only effective means of holding the majority of his hearers together."

There seems to be a slight inconsistency between the opinion expressed in the last sentence and that which the writer entertains of the hearers of Mr. Parker, according to his description, before quoted; for it is hardly to be presumed that any of the various classes which he enumerates would be much influenced even by a more "specious use of the Scriptures" than that which he ascribes to Mr. Parker.

As to his charge of hypocrisy, it is utterly untenable for a moment, and we are at a loss to imagine by what new feature of logic he would pretend to justify such a conclusion. That the Bible is the finest collection of devotional literature which the world has yet known, Mr. Parker would be the last man to deny; to use his own words, it is "crowded with truth and beauty from end to end;" and again he says, "the Bible is a whole library of the deepest and most earnest thoughts and feelings and piety and love, ever recorded in human speech." And yet, because he cannot accept it as the result of miraculous inspiration on the part of its writers, but can only look upon it as the product of the human mind, and therefore partaking of the errors and imperfections which are incident to all the works of men, — is he therefore to disregard it entirely, to fail to recognize its marvellous excellence, its immortal lessons of truth and piety? Surely not. If he thinks the Scriptures are a help to the development and culture of the religious

faculty of man, why should he not make use of them in his teachings, as of any other helps? To do otherwise would be to adopt the standard of our critic, who, because the ideas of religion advanced by Mr. Parker happen to differ from his own, can see no good in him, — a plan as narrow and foolish as it is unjust.

The writer complains that Mr. Parker says nothing about *sin* in his discourse, but too much of certain evils existing in society. It is true that Mr. Parker's preaching is mainly practical in its character, treating of actual duties to be done, and real sins to be avoided, having a direct application to the daily life of humanity, with its manifold powers, wants, passions, temptations, and aspirations, — rather than of that kind which deals in abstractions about "original sin," the depravity of human nature, and the like. The writer may have his preference for the latter, but there can be little question as to which is most welcome or most beneficial to the great majority of mankind.

The evils which Mr. Parker mentions in his discourse, in showing the need of a *real* Revival of Religion (that is, a "Revival of Piety and Morality in men's hearts"), — which, he believes, would do much towards removing them, — are, first, War, for which America spends "more than thirty millions of dollars every year, to hire fighting men, in a time of profound peace, and not one of them fixes bayonet to do mankind good;" next, the Character of the Federal Government, "the last place to which you would look for common honesty, for justice to our own nation;" third, Slavery; fourth, the Antagonistic Character of our Civilization, "so much poverty in the midst of so much riches, so many idlers in so much industry," so many fortunes dishonestly made, "our industry even a war of business," "a black sea of crime lashing the white houses of wealth and comfort, where science, literature, virtue, and piety together dwell;" fifth, the Condition of Woman, who is deprived of her natural rights, "in the market, the state, and the church not counted the equal of man," — from which come the "monstrous.

evils of prostitution, dependence, lack of individual character, enforced celibacy," and many others; and from these five great evils many lesser ones proceed, drunkenness, and crime in its thousand forms.

These things, so formidable in themselves, and of the wide spread effects of which the mind can form no adequate conception, are however of small account in the estimation of our critic. A single flourish of his pen, and they are quietly disposed of, as follows: —

“Some of these are evils against which civilized society always is, and we presume always will be, struggling; some are incurable; and some, at best, are doubtful evils, if evils at all. We take it, there always will be differences in human conditions. The poor will be the most numerous, perhaps not the most unhappy. War, though an evil, is not so much so as loss of national honor and character, or submission to intolerable wrong. The degradation of woman in this country is a humbug of the most absurd and unfounded pretensions. Every woman of sense knows, that she could ask no higher degree of respect and affection than she receives here, when she deserves it, and often when she does not; and that she could in no condition of society exert a clearer or more constant influence, than in this country and in this age. Every man, acquainted with human history and capable of reflection, knows that such of the ills mentioned as are absolute evils, and all other evils, with which the human race has been afflicted, owe to Christianity every softening influence which has breathed upon them, and that to that only can humanity look for their cure, so far as it can be accomplished.

“The philosophical way of effecting any further improvement in this respect, therefore, would seem to be, by using every laudable and rational exertion to make men better Christians, and to convert such as are not so already.”

Although we can hardly think that the first portion of these statements will convince any one who is “acquainted with human history, and capable of reflection,” of the non-existence of any of the evils in question, or reconcile their victims to a more patient endurance of them, yet we cordially subscribe to the last suggestion, and venture to affirm that this is precisely what Mr. Parker is earnestly laboring to accomplish, “to make men

better Christians, and to convert such as are not so already." Here we come in contact with our writer, who declares that Mr. Parker is striving to "break down Christianity." Now if Christianity is identical with what Jesus declared were the great commandments, on which hung all the law and the prophets—the love of God with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and the love of one's neighbor as himself,—then Mr. Parker and those who labor with him are doing all they can to build it up; but if Christianity consists of something quite different from these, to which theologians have falsely given its name, then we will not dispute that they are trying to break it down.

If any persons who are hearers of Mr. Parker, or who are familiar with his writings, should chance to peruse these remarks, they will probably be somewhat astonished to learn that he has enlisted Mormonism and Spiritualism in his service to aid him in breaking down Christianity; and yet that such is the case we are gravely informed by the writer in these words:—

"There have been, he tells us, the religion of Moses, the religion of Jesus, that of Luther, of the Baptists, of the Unitarians and Universalists, of the Spiritualists and the Mormons. The two latter he seems to like the best, as the most efficient for the work proposed by him. They will help most to *shatter, set men loose*, etc. 'See the growth of Mormonism!' says he; 'that has something which mankind wants;' though we are unable to see exactly how he reconciles this with his idea of the degradation of woman. Spiritualism, too, has done good service in the same way."

Here is the passage in the discourse of Mr. Parker which gave rise to the above paragraph. He is speaking of the need which the people feel for a real revival, and how they therefore turn off to look at all new things in religion:—

"See the growth of Mormonism. Even that has something which mankind needs; else men, and especially women, would not cross the sea three thousand miles wide, and then travel three thousand more by river or by land for its sake. The success of Mormonism is a terrible protest against

the enforced celibacy of millions of marriageable women, and the worse than celibacy of so many who are called married, but are not. Fifteen years ago, 'Spiritualism' was two women making mysterious noises in Rochester, N. Y. Now it is, I know not how many millions of persons, some of them thoughtful, many hungering after God. 'Spiritualism' had something to offer which the churches could not give. Nothing comes of nothing; every something has a cause."

And in another part of the discourse he remarks:—

"The Spiritualists are the only sect that looks forward, and has new fire on its hearth; they alone emancipate themselves from the Bible and the theology of the church, while they also seek to keep the precious truths of the Bible, and all the good things of the church. But even they—I say this modestly; they are a new sect, and everybody wars against them; my criticism I give for their good, in the spirit of hope and tenderness—even they are rapping on coffin lids, listening for ghosts, seeking God and God's truth *beyond* human nature, not *in* human nature. Their religion is Wonder more than Life; not principally addressing itself to the understanding, the imagination, the reason, the conscience, the soul, but to marvellousness more than aught besides. So with many it is amazement, and not elevation."

Put these three paragraphs just quoted in juxtaposition, and what shall be said of a writer who thus descends to such gross perversion to enable him to maintain a feeble argument? He purports to be a zealous defender of Christianity, according to his notion of it, but it may well be presumed that any cause would lose far more than it would gain from such advocacy of it. This, however, is not all; he goes a step further in his charge against Mr. Parker:—

"But it is quite obvious that other things would answer his purpose quite as well, without resorting to the degradation of woman, as practised by the Mormons, or the degradation of the understanding, as exhibited by the Spiritualists. No doubt, he feels more confidence in these, because they, like himself, come forward nominally in the guise of something which they call religion; but it is evident that 'rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying,'—in fact, any of those sins which are expressly denounced by Scripture and reason as well,—if brought forward and encouraged to the same end, would equally serve the purpose to break down Christianity,—if they could."

The intimations contained in the foregoing paragraph are as contemptible, as they are false and unjust.

We are told by our critic that Mr. Parker

“ Holds religion to consist in doing our duty to man. Of course, we all fail to do this. If we do it perfectly, we do no more than we ought. Failure in this respect, therefore, is criminal; while perfect fulfilment of it would be without merit, except comparatively, since we do no more than we are bound to do.”

We cannot perceive the force or reasonableness of statements like these, as applied to men, such as have existed in the world hitherto, or such as live at this day, at least in their present stage of advancement. It seems to us that the duties which men owe to each other are very little understood, and practised still less,—though there is a continual improvement in this respect,—and we hold that the performance of these duties constitutes a large part of religion. Such seems to have been the opinion of Jesus of Nazareth, as expressed in his teachings, and exemplified still more nobly in his life and character.

“ But,” continues the writer, “ besides this, we owe a perfect service to God, for his own sake—to love and worship Him, because he is infinitely good.” Very true! But of this service he denies that Mr. Parker has any conception, which is by no means true. We do not propose to enter into an elaborate exposition of Mr. Parker’s scheme of theology, but in justice to him, let us say that, while he teaches the loftiness of man’s nature, its vast powers, bodily and spiritual, their adequacy for the purpose which God meant they should achieve, and their indefinite capability of future growth and expansion and consequent attainment, together with the various duties pertaining to their development and use, in man’s relation to the world of matter, to man, and to God,—he also teaches an Idea of God higher than has been taught by any man before him, living or dead; the God of Infinite Perfection, perfect in all his attributes, infinite in wisdom, power, justice, love, and

holiness; the perfect Cause of all that is, creating all from a perfect motive, for a perfect purpose, of perfect material, as perfect means thereto; perfect Providence also, so arranging all things that the highest welfare shall ultimately result to each and all;— a conception of the Deity which will bear the test of any honest criticism, which commends itself to the reason, as well as to the heart and soul of man, and which when analyzed will be found to be consistent in all its details. He teaches that Religion consists of two parts; first, Morality, which is the objective service of God, by keeping all the laws which he has made for body and spirit, giving the body its due use, development, enjoyment, and discipline in the world of matter, and giving also to the spirit— comprising the mind, the conscience, the heart, and the soul— its due use, development, enjoyment, and discipline; second, Piety, the subjective worship of God, the love of God as God, with all the mind and conscience, heart and soul, an absolute trust and confidence in Him, which brings tranquillity and strength and deepest joy.

This idea of God is the foundation of all Mr. Parker's teachings; it is the most conspicuous thing in his sermons; it inspires him with the profoundest reverence and the deepest trust, and is perhaps the one thing above all others which has given him so strong a hold on the admiration and the affection of thousands of true and earnest men.

It was our intention to have noticed some other points in the article under consideration, but perhaps we have said enough to prove that its author is no exception to that large class of persons who attempt to criticize Mr. Parker, while they are ignorant of his real character and teachings, or who, familiar with them, from various base motives misrepresent them, for the purpose of exciting an unjust prejudice in the minds of others. We of course make no allusion here to those who oppose Mr. Parker from conscientious motives; we are convinced that neither he nor his friends would deprecate any honest criticism, from whatever source it might proceed.

It is curious, and not less painful, to notice the penalties to which the men who do the greatest service to mankind are often subjected, it may be for the exercise of those very qualities which render them superior to other men. Here is one of the most remarkable men of any age or any nation, remarkable alike for original genius and acquired culture, with a mind of the highest order and the largest capacity, analytic as well as synthetic, powerful alike in the three great modes of intellectual action, in understanding, the practical power, which deals with details and methods, in imagination, the creative power, which originates new forms of thought or of beauty, and in reason, the philosophic power, which deals with first principles and universal laws; a man of immense and thorough learning — whose varied and extensive scholarly accomplishments any man might well be proud to possess; of such amazing industry and facility of acquirement, that, in the narrow compass of a life which has not yet reached to half a century, he has achieved more than other men, with the rarest exceptions, do in twice that period, or would if their lives were so prolonged; a man of the firmest integrity and moral courage, eminently faithful to his own conscience, which he will not compromise to secure the applause of men, and who cannot be seduced from the right by any of those temptations which so often prove fatal to the honesty of public and private men, who is never afraid to declare the whole truth, whomsoever it may offend, nor to point a plain finger at any iniquity, who-soever may be the doer, nor to lend his aid to any rightful cause, however humble and despised in the eyes of the world; a man of the truest and noblest philanthropy, whose generous heart and head and hand are in every good work, whose charity never fails, who is the faithful friend of the poor and oppressed of every class, who is merciful in judging of the weaknesses of others, kind and forgiving to such as bear malice against him and seek to do him wrong, who never utters a harsh word except against sin, who is of so genial a temperament, so truly

courteous and manly in his intercourse with others, that — however little sympathy they may have for his theological opinions — simply as a man,

“None know him but to love him,
None name him but to praise;”

a man of the warmest and tenderest social and domestic sympathies, which endear him to his family and intimate friends; a man who practises as well as preaches, who is a living example of that piety and morality which he so eloquently inculcates from the pulpit, and the daily beauty of whose life is a perpetual sermon, more eloquent and convincing than any which ever falls from his lips; a man, said Emerson, so well (when standing in his place in the Music Hall, a little more than a year since), “who has put us all into his debt by his brave life and incessant labor in the cause of truth, freedom, good morals, and good sense, here and throughout the world, and whose single and unaided performances in behalf of learning and humanity might well put colleges and churches to shame;” — here, we say, is such a man, so richly endowed by nature, and with such a noble culture of his faculties, living such a grand and beautiful life, who, because he has arrived at religious convictions differing from those of other men, and has the honesty and the independence to declare them, is subjected to an intolerance not less savage and intense than that which once put men to cruel death for opinion’s sake, only, thank God! it lacks the power to do so now; and this, too, in New England, the very cradle of religious freedom. Alas! the baby that nestled there in its weakness and helplessness, now that he has become a strong man, is not a whit the less a tyrant than those who would gladly have crushed out his young existence.

Those who practise this intolerance, however, hurt themselves far more than they do him against whom it is directed. There is compensation in all human affairs, as also retribution, and the men who, without a tithe of his ability, and with none of

his charity, affect to look down upon Theodore Parker, and to scorn him, while they get the honors of men, and the applause of the multitude, shall one day receive their due, as also he; and a noble man can well afford to wait.

In spite of all opposition, Theodore Parker is a strong man in a strong position. His parish is not confined to the two or three thousand who gather to listen to his preaching from Sunday to Sunday, but many thousands more, in our own land and in other lands across the ocean, look to him for counsel and guidance in those things which are of the deepest human concern, and, by their generous sympathy and encouragement, aid him in the mighty work which he is so nobly accomplishing — that of destroying old errors which have long held sway over mankind in the name of religion, and in their place building up such an idea of God, of man, and the relation between them, as no man need be ashamed to profess a belief in, and which, if practised upon, would produce such a blessed change in the affairs of men, that those who beheld it would bless God that their eyes were permitted to look upon so fair a sight.

“ He is the preacher, — him unto
 The word inspired is given,
 Whose life is lofty, strong, and true,
 Who never fell from heaven !
 He is the preacher, — from whose lips,
 To live forevermore,
 Majestical as full-sailed ships,
 The words of wisdom pour ! ”

The article upon Mr. Emerson, to which we come next, is one of those “curiosities of literature” with which one occasionally meets, which are entertaining from their very absurdity, the reading of which gives rise to much the same feeling as in our younger days was wont to be produced by looking at the caricatures in a “Comic Almanac,” whose chief attractiveness consisted in their monstrosity, which provoked our mirth while

they failed to satisfy our reason. The article is entitled "Emerson as a Lecturer," and purports to be "a few words about Mr. Emerson's last lecture in his course," and is mainly devoted to the consideration of that production, from which the writer deduces an estimate of his genius, character, and teachings.

Now one might reasonably suppose that the writer would have read this performance before attempting to criticize it at length, or at least have heard it. He has done neither, but takes for the basis of his remarks a brief notice of the lecture, occupying about a quarter of a column in a newspaper, — of which only some thirty lines are really devoted to the performance in question, — and in addition a single hearsay passage, which he quotes in three various ways, not knowing that either of them is correct. This would seem to be rather a slender thread on which to hang so much dead weight; and what renders the matter more ludicrous is the fact that he occupies two pages of his book in demonstrating that the first paragraph of the notice of the lecture is "sheer nonsense," that Mr. Emerson did not say what is reported, and he shall therefore "credit no such thing." We have no comment to make on the point in dispute. The difficulty of giving a condensed report of one of Mr. Emerson's lectures can easily be appreciated; his almost every sentence contains in itself so much condensed thought, and every word is so significant and full of meaning, that any thing less than his exact language is extremely unsatisfactory; and to convey any adequate idea of one of Mr. Emerson's addresses of an hour's length, in so brief a notice as that to which we have alluded, would be about as possible as to include Boston Common within the limits of an ordinary flower vase; we might indeed transplant a few grasses and white clover blossoms, or a single sapling, while broad acres, clad with verdure, and hundreds of majestic elms and maples and lindens, and other kings of the soil and air, each in itself a model of strength and beauty, would remain all unharmed. In justice to the writer of the notice, let us presume that he entertained no such infeasible design.

Our critic, however, — who seems to think that he has got Mr. Emerson in a nutshell, completely at his mercy, — notwithstanding his disparaging judgment of the first paragraph, accepts the remainder of the notice apparently in good faith, and proceeds with his argument, taking occasion to falsify the language of the report as he goes along, to suit his special purpose. We will not weary our readers by attempting to follow him into the labyrinth in which he thus involves himself, nor indulge in cruel comparisons referring to conflicts with wind-mills and the like. We propose only to glance hastily at two or three of the general features of this paper.

First we are favored with a dissertation upon *Genius* (in which the writer generously admits that “Mr. Emerson is himself a man of a certain order of genius,” though we must regret that the different “orders” are not given), which we cannot perceive throws any new light upon that much discussed question — “What is Genius?” and upon which, as a suitable commentary, we would suggest this passage from another part of the article:—

“The truth is, there are many persons, in our somewhat foolish days, who are unintelligible because they talk nonsense; and the cause of this is, that they waste their natural powers in a fanciful exposure of their search after, but inability to understand, the unintelligible. They really have no deeper insight than others into the infinite unknown; and thus, when they essay to converse upon it, the words they employ convey no distinct ideas, and those who hear them necessarily receive none.”

The writer has much to say about Emerson’s unintelligibility, and remarks (in allusion to a statement in the notice of the lecture), “those unable to comprehend him could scarcely render any ‘verdict,’ favorable or unfavorable;” and furthermore, “if all those who cannot comprehend Mr. Emerson were to be rigorously excluded from the chapel in Freeman Place, we fear that his Orphic sayings would be delivered to totally empty benches.” Now if such be the lamentable result of the earnest

attention which the highly intellectual and well-cultivated men and women who are wont to listen to Mr. Emerson give to his lectures, what must be the unhappy condition of him who undertakes to render a "verdict" upon one of the lectures which he has neither heard nor perused — an act, the presumption of which is only equalled by its foolishness!

It is doubtless true that what Mr. Emerson says or writes is not always so patent to the understanding, as, for instance, are the shallow sophisms with which the book under notice abounds, or the "common place excellencies" with which one meets everywhere in literature. His meaning does not always float on the surface, but requires some effort on the part of the reader to get at it, and well is the effort repaid. If sometimes he fails to declare himself so fully as the hasty and impatient reader may desire, but hints at, or suggests somewhat to be discovered beyond, rousing attention, and provoking thought, — and thereby paying a fine compliment to the intelligence and discernment of whoso would follow him, — surely it is for the benefit of the reader to be thus treated, and if he will but exercise the needful patience, — a quality of which every student ought to possess a large share, — he will have no occasion of complaint, but rather of gratitude. As has been well said, 'It ill becomes us to complain of those who, walking with the gods, sometimes speak of things too high for us. It will do us good to strain after them towards those heights of perfection, from which they look abroad with clearer vision than sits in our eyes.'

Our critic, in summing up Mr. Emerson's characteristics, tells us that he is "now serious, now touched with an apparent play of humor, consisting more of some unexpected turn or oddity of manner, than of the reality," that he is "without much power of discrimination," that "his conceptions are often unnatural, and their birth therefore is monstrous." These statements, and many others of the same sort which we will not repeat, are so palpably absurd to any one who has any real knowledge and appreciation of Emerson, that there is no necessity for alluding to them more fully.

We are told that "he seizes upon whatever suggestion comes uppermost," and, a dozen lines further on, that, "with much appearance of familiar, off-hand enunciation, the marks of careful preparation are manifest to the considerate observer, in whatever he does," — two statements somewhat irreconcilable with each other.

The writer informs us that the "instruction, moral or intellectual, to be derived from his [Mr. Emerson's] literary efforts, we have failed to see." Such defect of vision would be pitiable in any one who should make the least pretension to discernment in such matters; but it is especially so in one who assumes the office of a guide in these important departments of culture. No argument is needed to prove the fallacy of the impression which the writer seeks to convey. Surely there are few books which could be of more service to the growth and development of a healthy intellect, and do more towards securing that mental discipline which tends to the formation of a clear and well-regulated mind, than those of Mr. Emerson — the most original thinker and most suggestive writer in our literature. And certainly one of the most striking features of all his productions is the pure, deep, vigorous tone of morality which runs through every page, and which cannot fail to impress itself upon the mind of the candid reader, who must needs observe and admire the inflexible integrity, both of intellect and conscience, the unaffected honesty and independence which characterize the writings of this true man, who is a living example of that lofty morality which he teaches, as instructive as it is rare.

The article concludes in the following terms: —

"We think Mr. Emerson, different from some of his school, to be an upright and amiable man, saying what he believes, acting conscientiously, according to his light. But the light is broken. In its objects are falsely reflected. It cannot guide to good. It ends only in delusion."

When this writer set about the task of depreciating Mr. Emerson, he commenced under one of the most fatal of "delu-

sions," a ridiculous overestimate of his own powers.* It is well to have a reasonable degree of confidence in one's own ability; the extreme is dangerous.

Probably no other man has been of so much service to the cause of American letters as Emerson. His clear, keen sight, which enables him to discern truth and error at a glance, where other men — their eyes dimmed by the mists of prejudice and self-conceit — have no alacrity of vision; his rare insight into Nature, which is the marvel of men large-minded and quick-sighted like himself, as they listen with delight to his interpretations of her works and ways, his familiarity with all the best literature, with art and science, the wide range of his scholarship, his condensation of thought and expression, his freedom from every species of literary deception, his lofty standard of ethics, his fearlessness of statement and criticism, his delicate and subtle wit, his keen sensibility to the humorous, his ready sympathy with every noble effort for the elevation and refine-

* "Nature fits all her children with something to do,
 He who would write and can't write, can surely review,
 Can set up a small booth as critic, and sell us his
 Petty conceit and his pettier jealousies;
 Thus Pettifog Pickflaw, dispenser of spleens,
 Will do for the Jeffrey of six magazines;
 Having read Johnson's lives of the poets half through,
 There's nothing on earth he's not competent to;
 He reviews with as much nonchalance as he whistles, —
 His goes through a book and just picks out the thistles,
 It matters not whether he blame or commend,
 If he's bad as a foe, he's far worse as a friend;
 Let an author but write what's above his poor scope,
 And he'll go to work gravely and twist up a rope,
 And, inviting the world to see punishment done,
Hang himself up to bleach in the wind and the sun.
 'T is delightful to see, when a man comes along
 Who has any thing in him peculiar and strong,
 Every cockbout that swims clear its fierce (pop-) gundeck at him,
 And make, as he passes, its ludicrous peck at him."

Fable for Critics (slightly altered).

ment of humanity, his utter disregard of the shafts of ridicule or envy which have sought to make him their target, his serene and masterly self-possession, his hearty respect for human nature, leading him to venerate the substance and not the accidents of man, his deep natural piety, untrammelled and untainted by ecclesiasticism or bigotry, and his thorough individuality and manliness,—conspire to render his writings a mine of wealth, from which we may draw almost unlimited supplies of wisdom and beauty, and to which we may confidently turn for guidance in all the high needs of mortal life. And in his magnanimous life and character he embodies those grand virtues and excellencies which he inculcates in his written pages. Many a young man, seeking for an ideal of noble manhood, or struggling to realize the high conception which he had already formed, has found inspiration and strength in his words of lofty cheer; and many a young woman of poetic soul, with aspirations for the “first good, first perfect, and first fair,” has found satisfaction in drinking at that well of sweet and pure water, some of whose drops have congealed into pearls of womanly grace and tenderness and beauty. His influence on the thought and character of the age, not only here but in England and elsewhere, and not only now but for the future, is deep and permanent, and entitles him to the best gratitude and the heartiest support of every lover of good letters and sound morals, wherever he may be found.

Mr. Curtis is a much younger man than either of those of whom we have spoken. He is a gentleman, in the best sense of the term, and few men at his age could more justly lay claim to the title of scholar. He has won for himself an honorable position in American literature, and of late has lent the generous aid of his fine mental powers and personal influence to the advocacy of various noble reforms, among which is that in behalf of woman, — her right to be considered as the equivalent of man, and as such, justly entitled to an equal participa-

tion in the privileges, duties, and enjoyments of human existence.

Mr. Curtis's lecture on "Fair Play to Women" was an able and eloquent production, in which he portrayed the condition of woman from the earliest time down to the present day, showing that she had always been regarded as the inferior of man, and so had been debarred of many of her natural rights; that her state had always been one of subordination, and often of the worst degradation; that in our own time, notwithstanding the gallantry which some men profess in behalf of woman, she is still practically considered as man's inferior, and not admitted to equal privileges with him; that in justice and honor men should concede that every human being has a natural right to do, within the limits of the moral law, what God has given him [or her] the power to do; and that woman has the same right as man to decide for herself what is her sphere of action.

It is not our purpose to enter upon a discussion of the interesting and exciting question of what is popularly known as "woman's rights," any further than is necessary to point out two or three instances of the want of "fair play" to Mr. Curtis, or towards the question itself, on the part of the writer of this little book, in its third paper, — which consists in part of a vain attempt to depreciate Mr. Curtis, to whom he administers what he no doubt considers a very wholesome castigation in thus "presuming to stand out against the deliberate and settled sentiment and common judgment of mankind;" — and the remainder is devoted chiefly to threadbare arguments against any change in the condition of woman, which have been ably confuted again and again by women themselves and others in their behalf.

Says the writer: —

"No plan of which we can conceivē, could radically alter the physical distinction of constitution between the two sexes. Women are certainly born with a more delicate organization, as a general rule, than men. This

holds true as well among barbarous nations, which impose upon females laborious duties commonly assigned to the male sex in more civilized regions, as in the latter. Nature is predominant everywhere. She is the first combatant which Mr. Curtis must encounter."

And again,

"A very stout and strong woman, whether of mind or body, with a gruff voice and a masculine stride, can no more be looked upon as an interesting object than an overgrown alderman."

And still further,

"All women could not perform the duties of men."

Now nobody disputes so obvious a fact as the "physical distinction of constitution between the sexes;" nor do we presume that the most radical advocate of "woman's rights" ever entertained the insane idea of attempting to alter this distinction; nor is it proposed or desired that women shall affect "a gruff voice and a masculine stride," nor that all women shall perform the labors of men. Mr. Curtis expressly says in his lecture:—

"The question is not whether women are men. Men are men, and women are women; no boy is so contemptible as the she-boy, while the he-woman puts all men to flight."

Mr. Curtis spoke of the polygamy of the Egyptians and Jews, who bought and sold women, whereupon our critic vents his indignation in the following style:—

"Nothing could be falser than the idea which Mr. Curtis would convey of the state of the sex under the Old Testament dispensation, with the history of which we must infer that he is not very familiar. What mere flippant talk is this of his, about their being kept and sold as slaves! The Hebrew history fairly sparkles with the names of remarkable and honored women."

The ignorance and flippancy are wholly on the side of the accuser. That the Old Testament, as also the New, bears

record of many noble women, no man will deny; but that the Hebrew women were regarded in any other light than as inferior to men, or that their condition on the whole was any thing but one of subjection and degrading dependence, no man can successfully maintain. The account in Genesis of the creation of the first woman, represents that she was an after-thought of the Creator, made as a "helpmeet" for man, an appendage, designed solely for his comfort and convenience; and this idea runs through all of the succeeding books. According to the writer of the Book of Exodus, in the statutes given to Moses on Mount Sinai, in the tenth commandment, a man's wife is placed in the same category with his ox and his ass, and other personal property; and in the laws for servants the conditions are specified under which a man may sell his own daughter; "maid-servants" and "hand-maidens" are continually reckoned as part of the goods and chattels of men, and bought and sold as such; instances are related of the capture and also of the purchase of wives; and the record of polygamy and concubinage throughout the whole of the Old Testament is ample. In the New Testament, Paul's idea of woman is too well known to need quotation.

The writer also denies the degradation of woman among the Greeks and Romans, to which Mr. Curtis also alluded. If any new testimony were needed on this point, among the most recent is that of Mr. Buckle* — than whom no better authority could be desired, — who, in a lecture recently delivered at the Royal Institution in London, on "The Influence of Woman on the Progress of Knowledge," says:—

"Among the most celebrated nations of antiquity, women held a very subordinate place. The most splendid and durable monument of the

* Author of the "History of Civilization in England," the first volume of which has recently appeared, and is pronounced by scholars to be the most remarkable book of the day, and one of the ablest of the century.

Roman empire, and the noblest gift Rome has bequeathed to posterity, is her jurisprudence — a vast and harmonious system, worked out with consummate skill, and from which we derive our purest and largest notions of civil law. Yet this imperishable specimen of human sagacity is, strange to say, so grossly unjust towards women, that a great writer upon that code has well observed, that in it women are regarded not as persons, but as things; so completely were they stripped of all their rights, and held in subjection by their proud and imperious masters. As to the other great nation of antiquity, we have only to open the literature of the ancient Greeks to see with what airs of superiority, with what serene and lofty contempt, and sometimes with what mocking and biting scorn, women were treated by that lively and ingenious people. Instead of valuing them as companions, they looked on them as toys. How little part women really took in the development of Greek civilization may be illustrated by the singular fact, that their influence, scanty as it was, did not reach its height in the most civilized times, or in the most civilized regions.”

Speaking of the condition of woman in civilized countries, at the present day, our critic observes: —

“That she is exposed to peculiar evils, in this country especially, resulting from the relations of the sexes, and not traceable to individual disposition or character, or to casual misfortune from which no human being can be exempt, is a proposition which we think no very sensible person would undertake to maintain. To this we believe that all rational, well-conducted, and well-disposed women will agree; and that their state, as a sex, in modern times, is probably as good as it could be made by any human effort, in whatever perfected period of society. For, differing altogether from the speculations of Mr. Curtis, we should allege the condition of women in modern times — be it good or bad, for their apparent advantage or otherwise — to be the result of the natural disposition and settled purpose of men to cherish, honor, and protect them. And, if this be not satisfactory to their reason or their sensibility, we really know not what could be done for their benefit.”

This is based upon the assumption of the natural inferiority of woman to man, that she is under his control, to be managed as he shall see fit. If you accept this as a first principle, it is impossible to escape from the consequences of it. That the condition of woman in this age, and especially in this country, is better than ever before we have no disposition to dispute, but

that it has reached the maximum of human perfection we think there is considerable room for doubt; and at the risk of being considered as not a "very sensible person," we maintain that Mr. Curtis is right in his view of the matter, that there always have been, and still are, peculiar evils pertaining to the condition of woman, traceable not merely to individual disposition and character, but to this old error that runs through the whole history of mankind, of the natural superiority of man over woman, and consequently his right to subordinate her to himself. Exceptional women there are everywhere, who rise superior to their condition, as there are also exceptional men, of marked individuality of character, who attain to heights of nobleness far beyond the reach, or even the aspiration of their fellows, who possess only the average amount of courage and morality. But the great mass of both men and women are almost wholly controlled by the circumstances about them, for their good if the circumstances are good, for their ill if otherwise. The theory of the inferiority of woman has hitherto prevailed, and the practical results appear in her condition. Once the drudge of man, and still so to some extent, she is now in a great measure his toy and ornament. Denied many of the opportunities for intellectual culture which are freely granted to man, shut out from many scientific and industrial pursuits which he has monopolized, — but for which, judging from individual examples, she would seem to be as well suited as he, and oftentimes better, — and restricted within such narrow limits that she has no chance to develop her natural tendencies, and so qualify herself for such a position in society as she is best adapted to fill, — she often becomes the victim of the worst of vanities, and spends her life in small frivolities which end in nothing; or, impelled by poverty, resulting from the want of occupation, or by the desire of gratifying her love of vain show, she is plunged into that black sea of pollution which insidiously undermines the virtue of every great town, whose stain on her the white waters of the rivers of penitence and holiest aspiration in after years are all

insufficient to wash away, while man — such is the perverse judgment of humanity — may sport freely therein, and no blemish shall attach to his reputation, nor shall he be hindered thereby from attaining the highest position in society.

Who shall say what will not have been done towards alleviating or removing these evils, and many others which we will not stop to enumerate, when the true idea of woman shall prevail in society — the idea that she is the equivalent of man, of the same nature, yet with different powers, inferior in physical bulk and strength, and perhaps in mental power, but superior, as it would seem, in conscience, affection, and the religious faculty?

This, as we understand it, is the first step for which the advocates of this movement are contending, the acknowledgment of the equality of the sexes; and the next is the practical application of this theory to actual life, by allowing to woman equal rights with man, the same right as he to decide for herself what is her place, and how she may best accomplish what God has given her the capability of doing; the same chance for the culture and exercise of all her faculties, and equal participation in all the educational, industrial, political, and ecclesiastical privileges which are now enjoyed by man. This does not imply any change in the natural characteristics of woman, nor any compulsory exercise of these opportunities, but only freedom of choice on her part, and the right to use them if she will.

Our critic is sorely vexed with Mr. Curtis because he advocates the extension of the right of suffrage to women, as one means of remedying certain evils to which they are now subjected, and expatiates upon the contaminating influences of “caucussing and canvassing; the conflicts of parties; the selfish and too often demoralizing schemes of politicians; the falsehood, fraud, and passion; the elation of triumph, and the disappointment of defeat.” This is taking an extremely narrow view of the matter. It might be said, on the other hand,

that these are not the legitimate and necessary attendants of the exercise of the privilege of voting, but only excrescences which have grown about the ballot box, which a better state of morals on the part of the community, and a more thorough religious training, would do much to remove; and perhaps it is not unreasonable to presume that the refining and elevating influences which true women might exert over the grosser and more selfish portion of society would tend to the speedy correction of these evils. And it has been questioned, we think wisely, whether, if the superior moral insight and larger humanity which belong to woman had been brought to bear upon our national councils, such iniquitous enactments as the fugitive slave bill would have ever disgraced our statute book, or we as Americans have had cause to blush at the shameless subserviency of the federal government to the slave power, as seen in its repeated attempts to subjugate Kansas, and in other acts scarcely less atrocious.

It is hardly becoming in us as men to decide what are the qualifications of woman for new and untried pursuits, or to say how far and in what direction her efforts shall extend, until she has had, as she has not yet, a fair chance to prove to her own satisfaction and to ours, what her capabilities really are, and how they may be best exercised for her own advantage and the common welfare.

We cannot at this time go more deeply into this question, which we have only touched upon in the most general way. It presents many aspects of great interest and importance, which are beginning in various quarters to receive that fair consideration and careful treatment to which they are entitled. Meanwhile there is a large class of noble women, who are neither drudges nor toys, who in a quiet way are doing much for the elevation of their sex. Mr. Buckle, in the lecture from which we have already quoted, says there are "manifold proofs that women are gradually making their way, and slowly and surely winning for themselves a position superior to any they have

hitherto attained," and that, "they are capable of exercising, and have actually exercised, an enormous influence over the progress of knowledge," — and he goes into an argument of great length and ability to prove his statements. By every noble thought which woman utters, every good book which she writes, every protest against wrong, every act of justice, charity, self-denial, or piety, on her part, in short, by every effort of hers towards the development and right use of all her powers, in whatever station she may occupy, she helps forward the time when her true worth shall be seen and acknowledged, and her best influence exerted and felt.

The last paper in this volume is entitled "The Philosophy of Abolition," although one would hardly suspect the writer's mind — with the most liberal allowance for individual idiosyncrasies — to be of that class which can justly claim to be reckoned as philosophical. The document is of the most intense pro-slavery character, and, from the peculiar style in which it is written, the mode of reasoning adopted, and the conclusions arrived at, we should naturally infer that it had emanated from South Carolina or Alabama, had it not originally appeared in Boston. The length to which these remarks have already extended precludes our examining it in detail, and there is the less need of our doing so, as it is so manifestly preposterous that no reader of the least discrimination would be likely to be misled by it; and moreover, the class of persons against whom it is directed are always ready, and abundantly able, to defend themselves against all attacks of the enemy. A few specimens however of this singular production may not be unacceptable to our readers.

The writer commences by expressing his wonder "that people so intelligent as our own should trouble themselves to such an inordinate degree on the subject of Negro Slavery," and goes on to state that the first difficulty in the way of emancipation is the *fact* of slavery itself, which is established by law,

recognized by the Constitution, and that we have no right to interfere with it, and therefore all the efforts of the abolitionists and others who oppose it amount to nothing; — overlooking himself the great “fact” that slavery in itself is a *crime against humanity*, however protected by laws and constitutions, and therefore to be warred against, and that the first step towards its removal is the creation of a public opinion which shall recognize this fact; and in justice to the abolitionists we venture to suggest that they have done a vast deal towards the formation of such an opinion during the last twenty-five years, — to say nothing of other services — though their efforts in this behalf are not commonly acknowledged.

Our philosopher generously declares, —

“For our own part, we could sincerely wish that all mankind might enjoy the true benefits of civil freedom. We could heartily desire that not a single man, woman, or child, upon the face of the earth, were subject to any other domination — than what? We shall say, than that imposed by those divine laws which are founded upon the very necessities of our human nature, and by such equal civil requirements as the necessities of just polity demand. Our idea of freedom, therefore, it is plain, is one of subjection, — subjection to restraints both moral and political.”

Very good! This benevolent desire, it appears, however, is only a “sounding generality” on the part of the writer, which vanishes into thin air, when he comes to be a little more practical in his remarks. On the next page he declares his belief, —

“That qualification for freedom is a matter of training, cultivation, discipline; that those are not entitled to it who are not fitted for it, since their possession of the advantage must prove injurious to themselves and others; and that those are most entitled to such a privilege, who best understand and feel the obligations of self-government, and how individual comfort, prosperity, and happiness are promoted and maintained, by the observance of those principles which concern the common welfare.”

Apply this to the case in hand, that of slavery as it exists in

this country, and it extinguishes all possibility of its abolition, since such a state of bondage admits of no such "training, cultivation, and discipline," as the writer deems necessary qualifications for freedom; and, moreover, we hardly see how the American slave could very well understand and feel the "obligations of self-government." We would rather suggest that that cultivation and discipline which fit men for a state of freedom can be best attained under a direct enjoyment of its benefits, and that the obligations of self-government can be best understood and felt by those who have a practical experience in the matter.

The larger portion of the article consists of a graphic portrait of what the writer considers to be an "*abolitionist proper*," upon which he has evidently expended his best skill, and from which we extract a few choice touches, for the edification and warning of such of our readers as may not be aware of the dangerous character of that unhappy disturber of the sensibilities of the more conservative portion of the community.

"He finds himself outside of religion, law, and the ordinary sentiment and practice of just and intelligent men. And thus, not having the guiding light of wisdom, either divine or human, his mind is in that state of religious, moral, and intellectual confusion, which makes men mystics and fanatics, dreamers and schemers, always in conflict with practical truth, and rushing headlong after conclusions and aims, both moral and political, which neither religion nor natural reason do, or indeed can, possibly sanction. He has no settled principles which lead him to judge rightly and to act justly under all circumstances, and in the face of every question. His mind is crookedly warped; and he follows the tortuous windings of a perverse imagination from darkness to darkness, never coming to the light. He has broken clear of the restraints imposed by sovereign truth; and the region beyond it, in which he speculates and stumbles, is neither of heaven nor earth, but only that Fools' Paradise, in which unsettled minds roam through shadowy tracts of cloudland, and revel in palaces of dreams."

"An abolitionist is not necessarily either a socialist, a woman's rights man, or an infidel; but, whether consciously or otherwise, he is in inevitable sympathy with them all. What they call liberty, as we have seen, tends to unlimited indulgence of speculative belief, and of our physical

propensities and passions; to unbridled license of tongue; and, of course, to the practical abrogation of all the courtesies, civilities, and charities of life."

"Often is he himself only the slave of the fiercest bigotry and the most vindictive passions! And often, too, he proves to be the unblushing advocate of doctrines which lead to all confusion and every evil; which would destroy virtue, corrupt human society, and make earth itself a den of savages more brutal than wild beasts."

Comment upon this is quite unnecessary.

Here we take leave of this little book, which is only another illustration of that spirit of blind conservatism and selfish intolerance with which men in all ages have sought to resist the natural and upward progress of humanity, crying out upon those who, possessed of keener discernment, and having a wider scope of vision, animated by the true spirit of reform, have sought to help forward that progress by eradicating old errors and destroying bad institutions, which retarded the growth of mankind, and establishing in their place true ideas, and building up institutions to conform thereto. The great experiment of life, in its manifold forms and relations, is continually being tried upon newer and higher principles, with better and happier results. It is in vain for ecclesiastical bigots and time-serving politicians to insist that there shall be no progress in affairs of church and state; in vain for pseudo-philosophers and tenth-rate moralists to arrogate to themselves or to their little sect all the best thought of the age, to deny that there can be any excellency of character or deportment which does not conform to their own narrow standard, and to proscribe such as dare to think and act independently of them. In vain do they take their stand on the shore of time, confronting the advancing waves of progressive humanity, and, brandishing their little wands of authority, cry out, in their feeble voices, "Thus far and no farther shalt thou come!" The proud, imperious waters, all heedless of their command, move onward in silent majesty, and, in their resistless sweep, taking up the

helpless men, in spite of their mad and impotent struggles, carry them also forward to a higher plane of civilization.

In the great controversy of principles and opinions which is ever going on in the world, represented by institutions and parties and individuals, false ideas may prevail for a time, and evil institutions get established thereon; but they cannot endure; nothing but what is based on a principle of right can be established as a finality. The men who enlist in the service of falsehood and inhumanity may seem to triumph for a time, but it is the men who represent the cause of truth and justice who ultimately get the victory. Hated and persecuted they may be, by individuals or communities; but sooner or later the great heart of humanity, which is never deceived, responds to their efforts, and accords to them, or to their memories, their due measure of justice and gratitude.

“ There never is a true soul born for naught ;
 Wherever any such hath lived and died,
 There has been something for true freedom wrought,
 Some bulwark levelled on the evil side.
 Toil on, then, Greatness ! thou art in the right,
 However narrow souls may call thee wrong ;
 Be as thou wouldst be in thine own clear sight,
 And so thou wilt in all the world’s ere long ; —
 For worldlings cannot, struggle as they may,
 From man’s great soul one great thought hide away.”



